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A Republican and a Democrat

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A REPUBLICAN AND A DEMOCRAT WALK INTO A BAR ...

by **Yvette A. Schnoeker-Shorb**

A Republican and a Democrat walk into a bar—now there should be either a punch line or a brawl. But this actually involves two women who power-walk onto the town square. She and I pass each other every day, and have for almost two years, when doing laps on the sidewalk around the outskirts of the courthouse lawn. Friendly smiles, nods, pleasantries—and on the rare occasion we exchange more than a few words, we mostly chat about the weather, but never the world.

One time, the only time, we ever engaged in extended conversation was when she asked me to help her find her wedding ring, which she was convinced slid off her finger that morning when she had been doing her rounds at the square. Evidently, she found it somewhere else the next day.

But today, being caught in the crossfire of words between two opposing, political protest groups on both corners of the same side, we become more than acquaintances. A few steps ahead of me, as we are halfway down the block, she keeps her head down, walking faster than usual to escape the barrage of stereo shouting and angry sign shaking advancing from both ends. I feel sorry for her, empathizing with her obvious irritation by these people expressing their First Amendment rights.

“Historic times we live in, right?” I offer as I catch up to her. Seeming grateful for the company, as insults fly over and beyond us like bombs, she grabs onto my invitation for small talk. But it doesn’t stay that way. We keep pace with each other, chatting about the world—finally—like old friends. But after I listen to her perspectives, particularly on abortion, healthcare, and immigration, I realize that we are on different sides. And that sudden silence is my best defense when stepping with the enemy.

Yvette A. Schnoeker-Shorb

Yvette A. Schnoeker-Shorb’s prose and poetry have appeared in many publications, including *About Place Journal*, *High Desert Journal*, *Aji Magazine*, *Weber: The Contemporary West*, *AJN: The American Journal of Nursing*, *Adelaide Literary Magazine*, *The Conium Review*, *Flash Fiction Magazine*, *Watershed Review*, and elsewhere. Her work received Honorable Mentions in 2016 from both Port Yonder Press and Erbacce Press. She holds an interdisciplinary MA from Prescott College and has been an educator, a researcher, and an editor. She is co-founder of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Native West Press.



LAUGHING IN THE BUSHES

“Oh, so NO ONE has ever gotten DRUNK at a WEDDING before?” I asked, flinging my arms out to indicate that I was a very, very big presence.

< The EMT sighed, pushed the stretcher up against a wall, and came around to face me. “Do you know why we picked you up, Sarah? > Hmm?” I shook my head defiantly. “You were laughing in the bushes.”

– **Sarah Rose Cadorette**

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